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Cut Patterns on White Wood Ware



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DRYAD HANDICRAFTS LEAFLET No. 58.

CUT PATTERNS ON WHITE WOOD WARE



THE MANUAL ARTS PRESS
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and

DRYAD HANDICRAFTS

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CUT PATTERNS ON WHITE WOOD WARE

ONE is often surprised to find that long and elaborate methods, requiring an infinite amount of care and patience, produce little better, and sometimes worse, results than those obtained by more simple means. White wood ware, which has for a long time been the foundation for painted and gesso decoration, for carving and pewter work, is now suggested as the basis for a new and attractively simple process. Colour and carving are here brought together in a successful union, and though the carving is limited to small knife and gouge cut patterns, the results are astonishingly good.

This method might well be used as a preliminary to chip carving, as an elementary exercise in which experience could be gained in the use of gouges and knives.

Before being carved the wood is coloured with oak, walnut and mahogany stains or coloured enamels.

In the first case it is stained with water or spirit stains to the required colour, the design is cut away with a knife or gouge, leaving a white pattern, and the whole is polished with wax or French polish. In the second case the process is the same, except that the wood is painted with coloured enamel, and need be only slightly polished. The light, clear-cut pattern contrasting with the dark, polished surface of the stained or coloured wood makes an object, which though it may not be comparable in cost, is certainly in beauty, with many things of much greater value.

Almost anything made of white wood can be decorated in this way, but for transparent stains one should be careful to choose nicely marked wood, as the stain and polish enhance the beauty of the grain, which gives interest to the plain surfaces.

It is as well to start with something small, and to be careful to get the pattern right in scale with the object being decorated. The colours of the stains and enamels and the proposed patterns

should be tried first on an odd scrap of wood, to avoid mistakes on the finished work.

MATERIALS.

Apart from the white wooden objects themselves, the only materials necessary are stains or enamels, and polish.

STAINS.

Either spirit stains or water stains may be used. They are supplied in powder form in mahogany, oak and walnut colour, and must be mixed with methylated spirit or hot water as the case may be.

By changing the proportions of powder and liquid the stains may be made darker or lighter, or the colours may be varied by mixing two different stains together.

Spirit stain has a slight advantage over water stain, in that objects painted with it may be sponged when dirty without injuring the colour. Water stain, however, gives a rather better colour, but unless French polished or varnished it is not very permanent.

Dryad tins of water or spirit stain make approximately half a pint. Any surplus stain should be carefully bottled and corked for future use. Brushes used for spirit stain should be cleaned with methylated spirit, and those for water stain with soap and water.

Choose an object made of nicely grained wood and rub it all over with sandpaper, working the way of the grain, to remove the rough places. Coarse sandpaper may scratch the wood, so unless very fine is obtainable rub two pieces together until they are fairly smooth. Prepare the stain as previously described. Be sure that all the small grains of dye are properly dissolved and try the colour on an odd scrap of wood first to see that it is as you wish. All the colours dry just a little lighter than they appear to be when wet. With a clean brush, large enough to cover the space easily, paint the surface of your object with stain and allow it to dry. If it does not then appear sufficiently dark, apply another coat, being careful to keep the colour even. You will probably find that wetting the

wood has raised the grain in some places, and this must be smoothed down again with sandpaper.

ENAMEL.

Enamel being an opaque substance gives an effect quite different from stain. Any markings in the wood are completely hidden, so that the interest of the result depends on the colour and design alone.

Colours such as red, brown, blue, and green will prove to be the most successful, as they are dark enough for the pattern to show up clearly against them. With yellow or orange, for instance, there is not sufficient contrast between the colour and the white wood, so that the pattern sinks into the background and becomes insignificant.

In some cases two colours may be used together, but it is advisable to choose those that are not too strongly contrasted, such as blue and green. A little gold may also be introduced with effect.

A quick drying enamel, though it needs more careful application, is recommended in preference to a slow drying one, as it is often inconvenient and annoying to have to wait several hours before it is possible to start to carve.

Having sandpapered your object to make it quite smooth, use a fairly large soft-bristled brush and apply the enamel with a quick, direct stroke. Do not spoil the smoothness of the surface by going back over parts that have already been done. The first coat will take about half an hour to dry, after which a second coat is applied. This should be quite sufficient to give a good surface, but a third coat can be added if required. The appearance of the enamel is greatly improved if given a final rub with a little of the wax polish recommended for the stained wood.

A special liquid is supplied for thinning the enamel when necessary, and either this or petrol is used for cleaning the brushes, which should be rinsed finally in warm, soapy water before being put away.



Plate 2. Two Bowls and a Candlestick. Below, a Match Holder, Serviette Ring and Money Box.

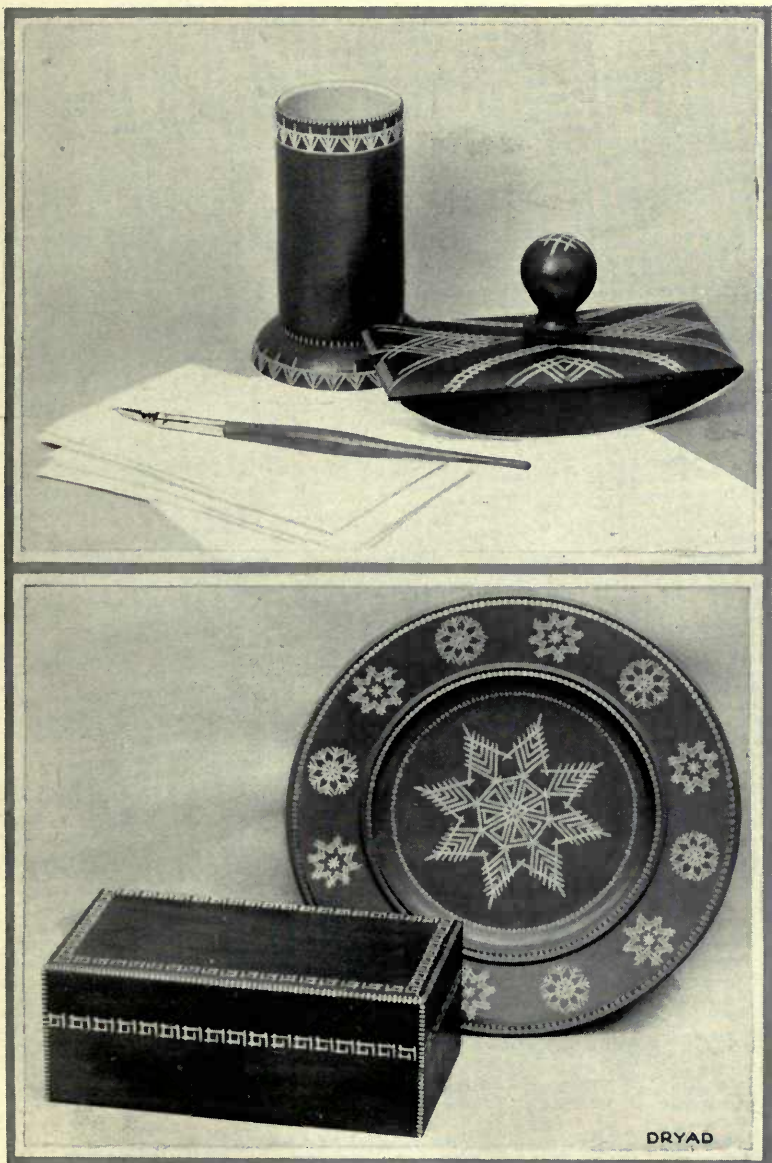


Plate 3. A Pen Stand and Blotter. Below, a Cigarette Box and Plate.

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Plate 4. A Calendar, Book Ends, Ash Tray, Cigarette Box, and a Match Box Holder.

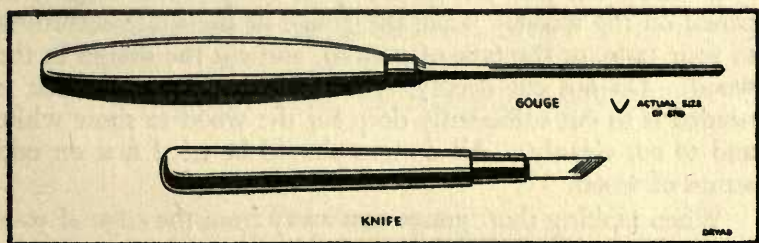
POLISH FOR STAINED WOOD.

There are two sorts of polish which may be used :—

(1) DRYAD WAX POLISH, which is specially prepared for this work and gives a pleasing dull polish. It is quite simple to use, being applied with a piece of chamois leather or soft rag, and polished by rubbing vigorously with a clean piece of chamois leather.

(2) FRENCH POLISH, which gives a bright polish to the surface, is in liquid form and involves a lengthier process. Lightly rub the surface to be polished with a little linseed oil. Make a pad of wadding and clean rag and moisten it with polish. Apply this lightly to the surface, taking the pad the full length of the article, and not in small jerks. Be careful to go over the whole surface. Having allowed the polish to become partly dry, rub it vigorously. Rub the surface with sandpaper, after which apply another coat in a similar manner, and so on until the desired polish is obtained.

TOOLS.



A very small U shaped gouge (Dryad Handicrafts No. 1) and a sharp, pointed knife are the most useful tools. The knife is perhaps the easier to handle, but the gouge gives a cleaner cut. In either case the tools must be very sharp, and an oil stone should be used to keep them so.

DESIGN.

The design should follow the main lines of the object and may be confined mainly to the edges in the form of borders,

though stars of isolated pattern may be effectively introduced when the plain central spaces are large. The stars may also be used alone as decoration without borders.

The reason for this is that the stained, polished surface of the wood is in itself sufficiently pleasing to need little decoration, and in the same way the crisp whiteness of the pattern looks richer and more decorative when surrounded by plain spaces of dark.

Small straight cuts are most easily made with the gouge, therefore when using a gouge, let your patterns be based chiefly on an arrangement of these, as illustrated on Plate 1. Large designs should be built up from small units of pattern, as it is much easier to make a small, clean cut than a large one whether using a gouge or a knife.

METHOD OF WORK.

Having chosen an object of simple shape, stain or enamel the surface, as the case may be, in the manner already described.

Decide upon your design and plan the position roughly in pencil on the wood. Take the gouge or the knife according to your taste, or the type of pattern, and cut the design in the wood. Do not cut deeply, it is not necessary. All that is needed is to cut sufficiently deep for the wood to show white and to cut cleanly. All designs should be tried first on odd scraps of wood.

When making short gouge cuts away from the edge of your work it may happen that the wood does not come away cleanly, in which case make a second cut in the same place, but from the opposite direction. You thus remove the wood without danger of splintering.

When using the knife hold it in a slanting position with the blade turning towards the shape to be cut. To make a straight line cut the wood on one side of the line, with the slope of your knife cutting towards the other side of the line, then turn the work round and make another cut on the other side of the line with the knife in the same position. While cutting the second

line a thin strip of wood will come away, leaving a V shaped groove.

In a similar way when cutting a triangular shape, one cut should be made on all three sides, with the knife in the same position always cutting towards the centre and turning the work round after each cut. The centre triangular shape should then come away quite easily.

Having cut the design polish the whole surface with wax or French polish, rubbing it until it has a glossy appearance.

Allow for the limitations of your tools, let your hand work freely, and strive to do the work as well as you can without mechanical aids or extreme exactitude. This will help to give a spontaneity and freshness to your work, which it might otherwise lack.

Wooden boxes, bowls, candlesticks, blotters and other shapes can be had from the Dryad Handicrafts, also stains, enamels, brushes, gouges, knives, wax polish and glass paper. A complete catalogue giving particulars of these and materials for many other crafts will be sent post free 3d. on application to the

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